

The Pulse

D.C. Department of Health Newsletter

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Gregg A. Pane, MD, Director

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PROPOSED LEGISLATION REPRESENTS LANDMARK PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE

By Patrice Dickerson

Mayor Anthony A. Williams recently announced the introduction of the *Community Access to Health Care Omnibus Amendment Act of 2006*, legislation that carries forward recommendations of the Mayor's Health Care Task Force establishing a \$248 million Community Health Care Fund.

The Council of the District of Columbia recently held a public oversight hearing on the legislation, which if passed, would be the largest public investment in preventive health care in the District's history.

Gregg A. Pane, MD, Director of the Department of Health, chaired the Task Force, which included representatives of hospitals and clinics, physicians, advocates, experts, and the community at-large.

"This legislation is a giant step forward in our effort to become the nation's leader in public health," said Dr. Pane. "Every resident in the District of Columbia will benefit from putting these tobacco dollars into improving quality health outcomes for District residents."

The Task Force was charged

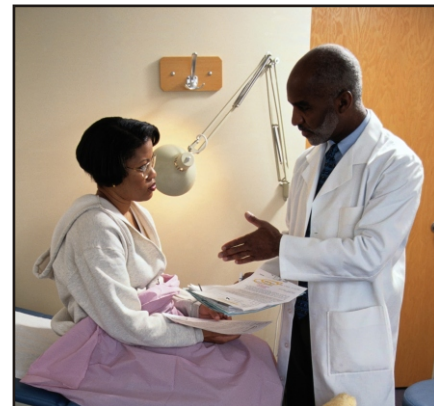
with advising the Mayor and the Council on alternatives for improving the health care presence in the eastern section of the city.

The legislation includes the following provisions:

- Establishes a \$248 million Community Health Care Fund;
- Authorizes the development of a healthplex facility on Reservation 13 to be modeled after the Inova Fairfax Healthplex;
- Funds the development of two major ambulatory centers, one each in Wards 7 and 8, which will be the hubs of the community health care network east of the Anacostia River;
- Authorizes the use of eminent domain authority to acquire Greater Southeast Community Hospital, if necessary;
- Provides close to \$50 million in funding to develop a cancer prevention program, tobacco cessation program, comprehensive chronic disease prevention program, regional health information exchange, and plan to improve the urgent and emergent care delivery system.

Other investments include:

- \$20 million for the DC Cancer Consortium to implement a citywide cancer prevention program;
- \$10 million for the American Lung Association of DC to



implement a tobacco cessation program in partnership with the American Cancer Society;

- \$10 million for non-profit organizations who will compete to advance our efforts to manage and prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and asthma;
- \$6 million for a partnership between the National Institute of Medical Informatics and the DC Primary Care Association to develop a regional health information exchange, modeled after regional health organizations around the United States;
- At least \$3 million to improve our urgent and emergent care delivery system, including \$2 million to be made available immediately for additional emergency transport vehicles;
- \$1 million will go to the DC Hospital Association for a comprehensive assessment of our urgent and emergent care delivery system.



ADMINISTRATION FOR HIV POLICY AND PROGRAMS AMONG FIRST IN THE NATION TO PRACTICE NEW CDC GUIDELINES FOR HIV SCREENING

INCREASE OF RAPID TESTING FOR HIV PUTS DC AHEAD OF NEW FEDERAL REGULATIONS

By Calvin Verrett-Carter

The DC Department of Health, Administration for HIV Policy and Programs (AHPP) put the District ahead of the rest of the nation by being among the first to practice new CDC guidelines in advance of the federal agency's recommendation to routinize HIV testing in all healthcare settings.

But District health officials say they want to take them even further.

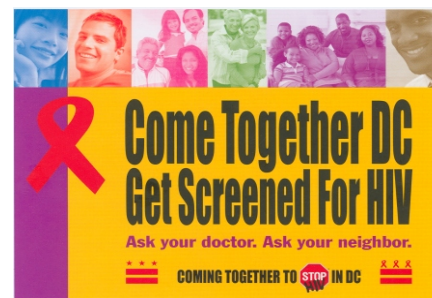
"We are pleased that our efforts have put us out front in developing solutions to addressing this public health threat," said DOH Director Gregg A. Pane, M.D. "The goal of increasing the number of people who have been screened is simple: early detection means earlier access to treatment and care."

DOH kicked off its groundbreaking campaign, "Come Together DC Get Screened for HIV," in late June and was one of the first public health agencies in the nation to begin offering rapid testing. More than 16,000 individuals have been screened, with preliminary three percent testing positive, confirming DOH estimates that the HIV infection rate in DC is triple the national rate.

Signaling a radical change in public health policy regarding HIV screenings, the CDC recently recommended patients would no longer have to sign a consent form and get extensive pre-test counseling. But they would have to be told they were being tested for the AIDS virus, asked if they have any questions and given the opportunity to "opt out."

"The move to expand rapid testing is part of our commitment to fully embrace every opportunity to stop the spread of HIV disease in the District," said Marsha A. Martin, DSW, Senior Deputy Director of DOH's Administration for HIV Policy and Programs. "And while the CDC guidelines recommend testing for citizens from age 13 to 64, we are going a step further and including DC residents from age 14 to 84."

Since early this year, the DC Department of Health has been expanding its use of rapid testing by offering HIV screening through community mobile units, community organizations, hospital emergency rooms, student health centers, substance abuse treatment centers and the DC jail.



Plans also call for DOH to provide rapid tests to private physicians, and offering one million condoms to hotels, bars and restaurants early next year.

Universal HIV screening is part of a nationwide effort to address three problems considered problematic by many experts: 250,000 Americans are infected with HIV and do not know it, 40 percent of those infected are diagnosed in an already advanced stage, and finally, the number of new infections in the U.S. has not declined in nearly two decades.

By the end of the year, DOH officials say they expect to have data on residents tested by age, gender and ethnicity.



Betty Jones of AHPP's HIV Prevention Division conducts an HIV screening at Freedom Plaza

DISTRICT OPENS \$116 MILLION EMERGENCY COMMAND CENTER

The Unified Communications Center (UCC) in Anacostia, D.C., is a nerve center for federal and district communications, and a place of refuge for district employees in the event of a disaster or emergency. The structure was built to be self-sustaining for 72 hours, and consolidates the "command and control" functions of the newly created Office of Unified Communications.

Built to house 350 staff members over a 24-hour period, the facility also pays attention to the high-touch aspects of working under stress, with an 11,000 square-foot child development center, exercise facilities, a brightly lit cafeteria and terrace retreat.

The primary intent of the new Emergency Command Center is to reduce the city's rate of abandoned calls and

improve answer and response times to both emergency and non-emergency calls. Agencies that will coordinate activities through the center include the following: District Police and Fire 911 (Emergency) and 311 (Public Safety Non-Emergency)

Call Centers; DC Emergency Management Agency; the Mayor's Emergency Command Center, District Department of Transportation (DDOT)- Traffic Management Division support system and the Mayor's Call Center among others.

According to Suzanne Peck, the District's Chief Technology Officer, 98.9 percent of 16,594 911- and 311-calls received at the center in the few days it had been operating were answered in five seconds or less; and in most cases, calls were answered in less than one second. That compares to an average of about 10 seconds nationally, for municipal call centers, she said.



The Unified Communications Center also includes a 24-hour, 11,000-square-foot child-care development center that can provide care for as many as 70 children of employees. This center includes a playground

MATERNAL AND FAMILY HEALTH ADMINISTRATION HOSTS FIRST DC WOMEN'S HEALTH RETREAT

By Joni Eisenberg

The Department of Health/Maternal and Family Health Administration (DOH/MFHA) recently held the first DC Women's Health Retreat. Organized under the umbrella of the DC Women's Health Advisory Board, chaired by Michal Young, M.D. and coordinated by MFHA's Adult and Family Services Bureau, Special Projects Division, the retreat was attended by a cross-section of engaged

The goals of the Retreat were to advance a pro-active women's health agenda for the District, and to craft a framework for strengthening the

D.C. Women's Health Advisory Board, laying the groundwork for the Board to help build a DC Women's Health Movement. The enthusiastic responses from Retreat participants indicate that these goals were certainly achieved.

In addition to brainstorming sessions on topics such as the vision and mission of the Women's Health Advisory Board, and next steps needed to move forward, participants enjoyed two inspirational and informative presentations on women's health.

The charge to retreat participants was given by Gayle Porter, Psy.D. whose topic was "We Are

Revolutionaries: Taking Care of Our Health and Our Sisters Too." Dr. Porter, of the Gaston & Porter Health Improvement Center, said that African American women die at rates greater than any other group of U.S. women. She also talked about the critical need to integrate body-mind-and spirit in women's health programs, sharing the "Sister Circle" model highlighted in the book she co-authored with former Assistant Surgeon General Marilyn Gaston, "Prime Time: An African American Woman's Complete Guide to Midlife Health and Wellness."

Drs. Gaston and Porter are recent recipients of the distinguished

"Purpose Prize," selected from over 1,200 nominees, acknowledging innovators over the age of 60 who are changing lives and societies through the important work they do daily.

Wanda Jones, Dr. PH, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health with the federal Office of Women's Health led an exciting lunch-time discussion on "Emerging Trends in Women's Health Status," sharing with

participants some of the concerns and upcoming priorities for women's health on the federal level. A small grant from the federal Office of Women's Health helped to make the retreat possible.

EFFI BARRY NAMED DOH DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS



Effi Barry

By Lee Mosley

The Department of Health is pleased to welcome Effi Barry, who has joined the senior staff as Director of Special Projects.

"I am very excited about having someone of Ms. Barry's caliber and

expertise doing what she does best, connecting with the community," said DOH Director, Gregg A. Pane, M.D. "She will certainly be an asset to our organization, and I'm looking forward to working with her."

A former professor at historically-Black Hampton University, Barry plans to use her formidable talents to help improve the health outcomes of District residents.

Barry, who will work within the DOH Office of Communications

and Community Relations, said she is looking forward to her work with the community.

"I am very honored to serve the Director of the Department of Health in the capacity of the Director of Special Projects," she said. "I hope to function as a bridge between the Director's office and the community by addressing the needs of the people through the implementation of effective initiatives."

FROM THE DESK OF GREGG A. PANE, M.D.



Welcome to the Winter edition of *The Pulse*, the DC Department of Health's e-newsletter dedicated to bringing important health information to improve the quality of life for every resident, worker and visitor to the District of Columbia.

This edition of the *The Pulse* will highlight agency achievements, as well as everyday citizens who are taking a message of good health to the community at a grassroots level. People like Ananda Kiamsha Madeline Leeke, who is working to help improve the health outcomes of women through a series of activities designed to bring a holistic approach to wellness by enhancing spirituality.

And as we wind up 2006, I can

look back with some satisfaction over the progress made during my short tenure as the District's Chief Health Officer, and look forward to meeting our goals for 2007.

The DC Department of Health is charged with promoting, preserving and protecting the public's health, and we remain committed to providing education and opportunities to help our residents make positive health choices.

We will continue working to protect the health and safety of all in our nation's capital by continuing to conduct emergency preparedness training activities such as the recent exercises executed by our Emergency Health and Medical Services Administration to test our ability to activate and implement our Incident Command Structure system and more specifically our Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) operations.

Next, we want to reiterate our

pledge to make sure that all District children are in our compliance with our school immunization program. We have an excellent record of 96 percent compliance with our program from last year, among the best in the nation, and we plan to make 2007 the year we reach 100 percent success.

And as we prepare for flu season, we are fortunate to have enlisted the aid of a number of community partners to make sure that DC residents aged 50 and over understand how important it is to get their flu and pneumonia vaccinations.

As you can see, there has been a lot of work done and yet much remains, but I know that by working together, we can make sure that every resident, worker and visitor knows that their good health matters to all of us here at the DC Department of Health.

LOCAL WOMAN SEEKS TO MAKE A HEALTHY DIFFERENCE IN HER COMMUNITY

By Bianca Williams

Many people talk about making a difference, but one local woman is on the front lines making it happen. Ananda K i a m s h a Madelyn Leeke is taking it upon herself to make an impact on public health in the District. She has dedicated her life to helping others through meditation and yoga, and last month in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, she hosted an event titled "COM-Munity Circle of Healing, Light and Love."



Ananda Leeke

Leeke and other women gathered at Meridian Hill Park, and practiced various yoga poses in honor of those

affected by breast cancer. The free event was dedicated to Leeke's grandmother, Frederica Stanley Roberts Leeke, who died of the disease in 1996.

"For nine years I've been finding ways to honor her spirit," she says. Her grandmother always promoted good health, and Leeke has certainly been passing on her message.

The three-time graduate has been living in the District since 1986 and holds degrees from Morgan State University, Howard University, and Georgetown University. It is her yoga teachings, however, that give her the most satisfaction. Leeke, 41, has been practicing yoga for 11 years, and has been teaching yoga for the past five months.

Leeke's service to the community does not end with Breast Cancer Awareness Month. She works with

Howard University Hospital, and does creative projects throughout the year with cancer patients and survivors. She also offers personal and group yoga sessions which she says help relieve the body, mind and spirit. Her office yoga classes even teach people how to relieve stress within the confinement of the workplace.

Leeke believes that everyone can make a difference in the lives of others, but it starts with personal wellness. Her mantra is "to be love, love light, and live in the spirit of life," and Leeke has some advice for anyone who wants to start living better. "Eat right, because you truly are what you eat. Be in good spirit, and put only positive thoughts into your mind." Leeke believes that by following these essential rules, personal wellness can be achieved by anyone.

Bianca Williams is a DOH intern currently attending Howard University.

APRA'S TYRONE PATTERSON RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION FROM PEERS

The American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence, Inc. (AATOD) recently honored Tyrone Patterson, CAC-II, for his contribution and achievements in the field of opioid addiction treatment during the organization's national conference. Recipients were nominated and selected by their peers for the award.

Mr. Patterson, a manager in DOH's Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration's Model Treatment Clinic, was one of 12 individuals recognized for their work helping addicts recover from dependence on opiates.

"Tyrone Patterson exemplifies the level of service we can expect from DC Department of Health staff," said DOH Director Gregg A. Pane, M.D. "His dedication and professionalism should serve as an



example to us all."

For more than 30 years, Patterson has worked to set the standard for methadone treatment clinics, and has championed compassionate treatment for opiate addicts, said Robert Johnson, APRA's Senior Deputy Director.

"Tyrone is an efficient and effective manager and leader," said Johnson. "His capable leadership has added great credibility to the District of Columbia's methadone treatment programs."

Patterson was honored at the AATOD's national conference in Atlanta, where he was presented the prestigious Nyswander/Dole or "Marie" Award, named for Drs. Vincent Dole and Marie Nyswander, first recipients of the honor and pioneers in the development of effective medication assisted treatment opioid addictions. "It was an honor to be selected from such an esteemed field of candidates," said Patterson. "And it is especially gratifying to be acknowledged by your peers and professional community."

DOH UNVEILS PSA'S AND CHECKLISTS TO PREPARE FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

By Calvin Verrett-Carter

The DC Department of Health's Emergency Health and Medical Services Administration (EHMSA), in coordination with the Office of Communications and Community Affairs has released a video, public service announcements in five languages and checklists designed to give DC residents information and education on pandemic influenza.

"As the nation's capital, we have to be ready for the possibility - no matter how remote - of pandemic influenza," said DOH Director Gregg A. Pane, M.D. "The video, PSA's and checklists are important first steps in making sure that residents, workers and visitors to the District are prepared."

The video, entitled "Pandemic Influenza: Staying Informed; Staying Healthy," has an all-star DOH cast, including Dr. Pane, EHMSA Senior Deputy Director Beverly Pritchett of and Dr. David Rose, Senior Deputy Director of DOH's Primary Care and Prevention Administration.

Last Spring, EHMSA spearheaded a Summit on pandemic influenza, and since then has been engaged in other planning activities to make sure that if a pandemic ensues, District residents will be less likely to become sick, more likely to get good medical care if they do get sick, and have less disruption to their day-to-day activities.

The checklists provide guidance for law enforcement agencies and media organizations in developing and improving plans to prepare for pandemic influenza.

In the event of a global disease outbreak, law enforcement agencies will play a critical role in ensuring secure transportation of medical supplies, smooth operation of mass vaccination clinics and assistance in enforcing potential quarantine orders.

The checklist for media gives tips to editors and publishers for developing or improving their influenza pandemic response and preparation plans.

"Our law enforcement and media partners should have coordinated plans in place to ensure they can continue to operate in the event of a flu outbreak, where a significant number of their employees could be affected," said Dr. Pane. "Our goal is to coordinate all of our efforts so that there is an appropriate response to pandemic influenza or any life-threatening public health emergency."

Presently, avian (bird) flu or H5N1 only affects birds and has not spread to humans without close contact. However, it is a growing public health concern with DC health officials estimating that about 30 percent of the District's 554,000 residents could become ill.

An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges and there is little or no natural immunity in the affected population, and Beverly Pritchett, Senior Deputy Director of DOH's Emergency Health and Medical Services Administration, says an effective vaccine may not be immediately available. "These checklists will help us establish a vital link to the public regarding vaccination, treatment, self-care, isolation and quarantine," she said.

In a worst case scenario, a pandemic that produces widespread serious illness could significantly impact all sectors of society and last for at least several months. The health care system would be overburdened and there could be dramatic reductions in workforce availability in all sectors as employees become ill or remain home to care for sick family members. This is why continuity planning is so important for media, law enforcement and business.

Residents are urged to practice preventive measures such as washing hands frequently with soap and water, covering their coughs, and most important, staying home if they are sick in the event of pandemic influenza.

To view the Director's Pandemic Influenza Preparedness message click here

http://www.octt.dc.gov/services/on_demand_video/special/depts/DOH_Pan_Flu_Video.aspx and to see the video go to

http://www.octt.dc.gov/services/on_demand_video/special/depts/DOH_Pandemic.aspx

For more information about Pandemic Influenza visit www.doh.dc.gov or www.pandemicflu.gov

TEST YOUR FLU IQ Take A Shot at This Flu Test!



1. Flu shots can't give you the flu. **T or F**
2. Flu shots don't protect against colds. **T or F**
3. You can get a flu shot if you're sick. **T or F**
4. You can get a flu shot and other vaccinations at the same time. **T or F**
5. It's important to get a flu shot if you're pregnant. **T or F**
6. It's O.K. for a breast-feeding mom to get a flu shot. **T or F**
7. A flu shot can save your life. **T or F**



Calendar of Events

DOH TO PARTICIPATE IN 9TH ANNUAL DC SENIORS HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

The DC Department of Health will once again participate in the 9th Annual Senior's Holiday Celebration at the D.C. Armory, 2001 East Capitol Street, SE (next to RFK Stadium). This year's event, called "Celebrating Our Ages through Diversity," is scheduled for

Thursday, December 14, 2006 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

This annual event brings together 3000-plus seniors from around the city to receive information on vital aging-related programs and other public services, receive a nutritious meal, gifts and

enjoy an afternoon of entertainment and socialization.

In keeping with the theme, there will also interactive demonstrations and exhibits. The annual celebration is sponsored by the DC Office on Aging and the Senior Service Network.

CALENDAR INFORMATION

To submit your entry for the calendar, information must be received fourteen to thirty days

before the event date. Please include the theme, date, time, address, description, sponsor, telephone number, and ward. E-mail submissions to healthpromo@dc.gov or fax them to 202-535-1710. Because of the large number of

submissions received, please send your information in a timely manner. Please contact Angela Simmons at healthpromo@dc.gov for more information.

TEST YOUR FLU IQ (ANSWERS)

1. **TRUE.** Flu shots use killed vaccine. You can't get the flu from a flu shot!
2. **TRUE.** Flu shots give very good protection against the flu. But they DON'T keep people from getting colds or other illnesses.
3. **TRUE.** Its O.K. to get a flu shot if you have minor illness (like a cold or diarrhea). If you are very sick with fever, though, you should wait until you feel better to get a shot. (Ask your doctor if you're not sure what to do.)
4. **TRUE.** It's O.K. to get a flu shot along with other vaccinations, such as routine childhood immunizations or a pneumonia shot.
5. **TRUE.** Flu shots are recommended for pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy.
6. **TRUE.** Breastfeeding moms who get flu shots are protecting themselves and their babies. Infants younger than 6 months can get the flu, but they are too young for a flu shot. When the people around them get vaccinated, infants are much less likely to get the flu.
7. **TRUE.** People 65 and older, who get a flu shot for example, greatly reduce their risk of dying during flu season from all causes not just the flu.

Miss 1-2 You're almost a flu expert!

Miss 3-4 Bone up on your flu info!

Miss 4-7 Get ready for a bout of flu this winter!

The Pulse Newsletter is published by the DC Department of Health.

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